

AUSTIN PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

WINDOWS

SUMMER 2008

Micah 6:8

**Former Death Row chaplain on capital punishment
The Stewpot at First Presbyterian Church, Dallas
Living humbly: a GA sermon by Cynthia Rigby**



The President's Preaching and Speaking Engagements

- July 20**, *Preacher*, Community PC, Lake City, Colorado
- August 10-11**, *Preacher*, Epworth-by-the-Lake United Methodist Conference Center, Ludington, Michigan
- September 14**, *Preacher*, John Knox PC, Tulsa, Oklahoma
- September 27**, *Preacher*, First PC, Atlanta
- October 4-8** *Preacher*, Annual Celebration of Faith Series, Eastminster PC, Columbia, South Carolina
- October 2**, *Speaker*, Partnership Luncheon, Austin
- October 30**, *Speaker*, Partnership Luncheon, Dallas
- November 9**, *Preacher*, Trinity PC, Atlanta
- November 16-17**, *Preacher*, Festival of Faith, St. Andrew PC, Denton, Texas
- December 7**, *Preacher*, Centennial Celebration, First PC, McAllen, Texas
- February 12**, *Speaker*, Partnership Luncheon, Waco, Texas
- February 22**, *Preacher*, First PC, Waco
- February 28-March 1 2008**, *Campbell Preacher*, Sewickley PC, Sewickley, Pennsylvania

The prophet Micah has written: “God has shown you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8). I don’t know a more stirring call to a vocation of Christian service than this.

This issue of *Windows* offers three portraits of such service that help to illuminate Micah’s words. In the first portrait, Jan Williams lifts up the life and witness of Austin Seminary alumnus Carroll Pickett, a long-time prison chaplain, and traces how his ministry on Death Row changed his mind about the death penalty. In the second portrait, Austin Seminary alumnus Bob Lively recounts the way in which the raw imperatives of poverty and homelessness shaped his conscience—and that of First Presbyterian Church in Dallas—into one of this country’s most illustrious models of urban ministry. In the final portrait, Austin Seminary Professor Cindy Rigby’s recent sermon at this summer’s Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly in San Jose unpacks the various layers of true humility. Each one of these portraits will echo Micah’s charge to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

You will also get the latest news from our campus, with a particular emphasis upon this spring’s commencement festivities. The snapshots of our graduating seniors and what is known about their immediate plans for the future will confirm, once again, that Austin Seminary remains focused upon providing a serious theological education for the life of service to the church.

While their witness in great measure stretches before them wrapped in promise, we are also reminded in this issue of *Windows* of several notable Christian servants whose lives have become rich and demonstrative statements of justice, kindness and humility. I think of Clarence Frierson, a longtime trustee and, for a crucial time in the life of the Seminary, the chair of the board. Now welcomed into the Communion of the Saints, this beloved gentleman was the very epitome of servant leadership. I think as well of those others mentioned from our broader Seminary community whose baptisms are now completed in death. And I think of our dear friend John Evans—very much alive—whose retirement has been feted in numerous ways and with good reason. At a reception for John near the end of school, I recalled the memorial to the great architect Christopher Wren that lies embedded in the floor of the crossing of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London—Wren’s greatest work. Not a statue or anything quite so obvious, the memorial is instead a modest brass tablet bearing Latin words that proclaim: “If you seek his monument, look around you.” This is the same way in which we take stock of John’s impact upon the church—by looking at forty years’ worth of students and pastors whom he has nurtured into, and through the various junctures of, Christian service. They are his monument.

May you be inspired over and over again in the pages that follow! And may you find encouragement in your own efforts to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

Theodore J. Wardlaw
President

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Cassandra C. Carr, *Chair*

- Michael D. Allen
- Karen C. Anderson
- Thomas L. Are Jr.
- Susan Beaird
- F. M. Bellingrath III
- Dianne E. Brown (MDiv'95)
- Elizabeth Christian
- Joe Clifford
- James G. Cooper
- Marvin L. Cooper
- Elizabeth Blanton Flowers
- Donald R. Frampton
- Richard D. Gillham
- Walter Harris Jr.
- Bruce G. Herlin
- Norman Huneycutt (MDiv'65)
- J Carter King III (MDiv'70)
- Michael L. Lindvall
- Catherine O. Lowry
- Blair R. Monie
- Virginia L. Olszewski (MDiv'94)
- B. W. Payne
- William C. Powers Jr.
- Jeffrey Kyle Richard
- Teresa Chávez Saucedá (MDiv'88)
- Anne Vickery Stevenson
- Karl Brian Travis
- John L. Van Osdall
- Sallie Sampsel Watson (MDiv'87)
- Elizabeth Currie Williams
- Hugh H. Williamson III
- Judy A. Woodward

Trustees Emeriti

- Stephen A. Matthews
- Edward D. Vickery
- Louis Zbinden

Publisher & Mailing Statement

Windows is published three times each year by Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

ISSN 2056-0556

Non-profit bulk mail permit no. 2473

Austin Seminary *Windows*
 Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
 100 E. 27th St.
 Austin, TX 78705-5797

phone: 512-472-6736
 e-mail: windows@austinseminary.edu
 fax: 512-479-0738

www.austinseminary.edu

WINDOWS / Summer 2007

2-14 *Do justice. Love kindness. Walk humbly.*

2 *A change of heart*
Former death-row chaplain takes a stand
against capital punishment
 BY JANIS WILLIAMS

6 *To the least of these*
The founding of the Stewpot ministry at First
Presbyterian Church, Dallas
 BY ROBERT D. LIVELY (MDIV'73)

11 *“Umble Pie”*
A sermon from the 218th General Assembly
of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
 BY CYNTHIA L. RIGBY

15 *Community news*
The Class of 2008

23 *Faculty news*

25 *Development news*

26 *Alumni/ae news*

Back cover *Photos from the 2008 commencement*

WINDOWS

Summer 2008

Volume 123

Number 3

EDITOR

Randal Whittington

CONTRIBUTORS

- Shuhan Chan
- John R. Evans
- Kate Loveless
- Sharon Pawlik
- Nancy Reese
- Georgia Smith

Cover photo: From the filming of “At the Death House Door” by Kevin Horan/IFC



Theological Education Fund
 (1% Plan)

The theological schools of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) no longer receive funding from the basic mission budget of the General Assembly. Churches are asked to contribute 1% of their operating budgets to the fund, which is then distributed to the seminaries.

A Change of Heart



BY JANIS WILLIAMS

Some transformations happen over a long period of time, the result of deep thought and accumulated experience. Others take place in an instant, when new light is cast on a problem. Presbyterian minister Carroll Pickett's (MDiv'57) conversion from death penalty advocate to passionate opponent of state-sponsored executions had its genesis in a dramatic experience that was followed by years of soul-searching.

In 1980, when Pickett resigned his position as pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Huntsville, to become chaplain at "The Walls," the Huntsville unit of the Texas prison system, he rarely thought about the death penalty. "Odd as it sounds, the subject never came up," he says. "Huntsville was a prison town, and the prison dominated everything there. But when my family and I moved to Huntsville in 1967, there had been no executions since capital punishment was outlawed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1964. Death row was very small and to tell you the truth, I'd never discussed the issue in seminary or any of my pastorates. The death row warden was a member of my church, and even he never mentioned capital punishment to me."

If anyone had asked, though, Pickett would have admitted that he favored the death penalty, for two reasons. First, his grandfather, a farmer and sheep rancher, had been murdered in a small Texas town near Lampasas. "My daddy was twelve when Grandfather was killed. Over the years, nobody told us how Grandfather died. But I found out when I was in seminary that he had been murdered in Lampasas one Saturday after an argument over a pool game. The other guy followed my grandfather out of the pool hall and just killed him, in front of several witnesses."

Asked whether his grandfather's killer was punished, Pickett said, "No. He was well known in Lampasas, so his friends got a local doctor to write up a death certificate saying that Grandfather had died of a heart attack. When I heard this story, I asked my father if it was true. 'Yes,' he answered. 'But we don't talk about it.' And he never mentioned it again, not to anybody. I've always assumed that was where Daddy got the attitude that capital pun-

ishment was a good thing, an attitude he passed down to me."

Pickett's view was reinforced in July 1974 when a hostage situation erupted at the prison. He was called to the office of the warden, who told him that prisoners were holding several employees inside the prison library—including two women who were members of Pickett's church. What followed was the longest prison siege in U.S. history, lasting eleven days and eleven nights. Pickett spent those tense days with the families of the hostages. In the end, the two women were killed, along with one of the prisoners. A second prisoner committed suicide, and a third was captured. With this, Pickett's support of the death penalty hardened.

Two years later, the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty, and the following year, 1977, a resolution against state-sponsored executions was brought to Brazos Presbytery, which encompassed Houston and environs, and included Huntsville. Pickett and members of his congregation spoke passionately in favor of capital punishment. "My church members had been killed only recently," he says. "I believed in retribution."

This belief, however, was more theoretical than practical.

"Even when the death penalty was reinstated, we didn't think of it as affecting us at the prison," he says. "I knew there were guys on death row, but so many churches were opposed to capital punishment that I was sure somebody would stop it."

The issue moved from the abstract to the personal for Chaplain Pickett on December 6, 1982. On that day he was informed that he would be accompanying Charles Brooks, the first person in the United States to be executed by lethal injection, to the death chamber. "The warden instructed me to show up at 6:00 in the morning on the day Charlie was scheduled to die. I had never met him, and I made the decision not to read his file. I didn't want to know what he had done. I just wanted to be there with him so he wouldn't die alone.

"We spent the day talking. I learned he had become a Black Muslim in prison, but that he used to be Methodist. Charlie didn't disagree with Christianity, but

"EVEN WHEN THE DEATH PENALTY WAS REINSTITATED, WE DIDN'T THINK OF IT AS AFFECTING US AT THE PRISON. I KNEW THERE WERE GUYS ON DEATH ROW, BUT SO MANY CHURCHES WERE OPPOSED TO CAPITAL PUNISHMENT THAT I WAS SURE SOMEBODY WOULD STOP IT."

he said the Muslims had helped him more while he was incarcerated. We talked about Jesus, and we read the Bible. He wanted to talk about the Sermon on the Mount. At one point he asked me, pointing to the Bible I held in my hand, 'Where does Jesus say it's all right to execute people?'

"Nowhere," I said. 'It's not in there.'"

Pickett stayed with Brooks until the drugs were administered and the prisoner drew his last breath. Then, weary, he went home and talked about the ordeal into a tape recorder. As he recorded his thoughts, and in the days following, the chaplain realized that something had happened to him in that execution chamber.

"I started thinking about the death penalty from a point of view of fairness," he says. "The more I studied, read, thought about Jesus' words, and prayed, the less justification I could find. Moses came down from the mountain and said, 'Thou shalt not kill,' as one of the Ten Commandments. 'You have heard that it has been said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I say to you ...'" and Jesus went on to explain that as Christians we don't retaliate. We turn the other cheek. We do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

"After I watched Charlie Brooks die, it began to dawn on me that this was not God's way."

Yet during the next fifteen years, Carroll Pickett walked alongside ninety-four additional death row inmates, stayed with each in a steel cell through their final hours, watched them eat their last meal, took messages to their families, listened to them talk, or sat with them in silence. He helped each doomed man draft his

final statement. He answered any question they asked him with honesty. Will it hurt? How long will it take? How many straps? How many needles? What's that sound outside the cell? And, as he had been instructed, the chaplain persuaded each man not to fight death.

"Fighting creates a horrible death," he says. "I hear they've had a lot of inmates fight since I left, and it's a nightmare. You can't put a 250-pound man to death if he's thrashing about. That leads to bloodshed. But none of mine fought. All of my companions in the death house came to acceptance."

After each execution, Pickett talked into his tape recorder. "Since I've been in that death house, I can see the power, presence, justice, and fairness of God," he said after one execution. "It's counter-intuitive, but God doesn't tell lawyers and D.A.s how to do their work. He doesn't answer every prayer on the petitioner's schedule. But neither does he abandon people at their time of death."

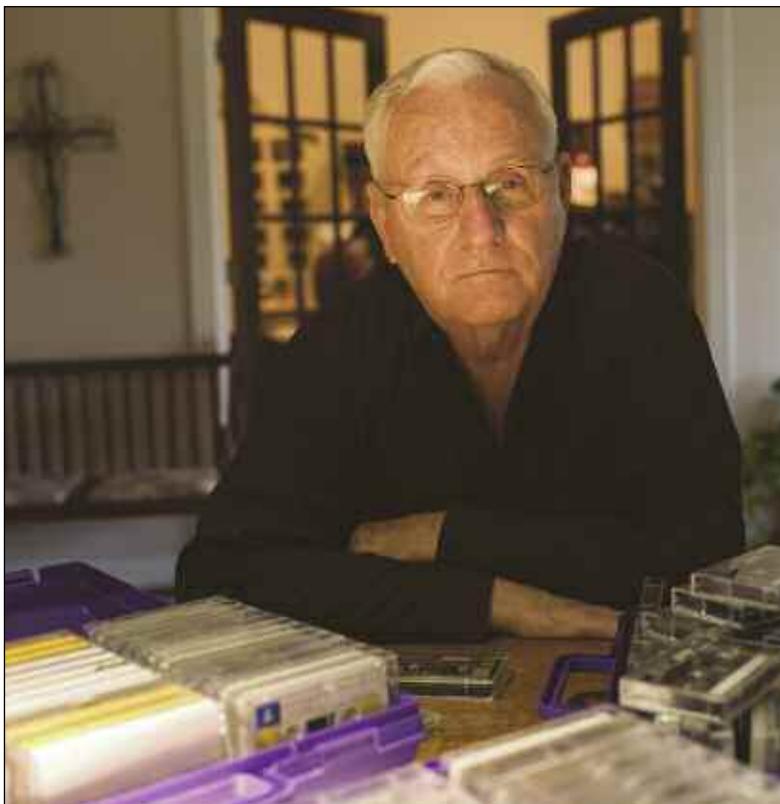
In addition to everything else, Pickett came to the conclusion that capital punishment does nothing to deter crime. "It absolutely doesn't work," he insists. "The crime rate keeps going up, no matter how many people we kill. And another thing: lethal injection hurts. It hurts. It's cruel and unusual punishment."

Asked how he could continue to be a death house chaplain after his change of heart, Pickett replies, "How I can be a part of something to which I object? Well, I object to cancer, but I don't turn my back on people with cancer. I developed what I called a Ministry of Presence.

"Just being there. Nobody should die alone.

"But I'll tell you this. My experience in the death house changed me completely." ▲

"GOD DOESN'T ANSWER EVERY PRAYER ON THE PETITIONER'S SCHEDULE. BUT NEITHER DOES HE ABANDON PEOPLE AT THEIR TIME OF DEATH."



Kevin Horn/IFC

Kevin Horan/IFC



“At the Death House Door”

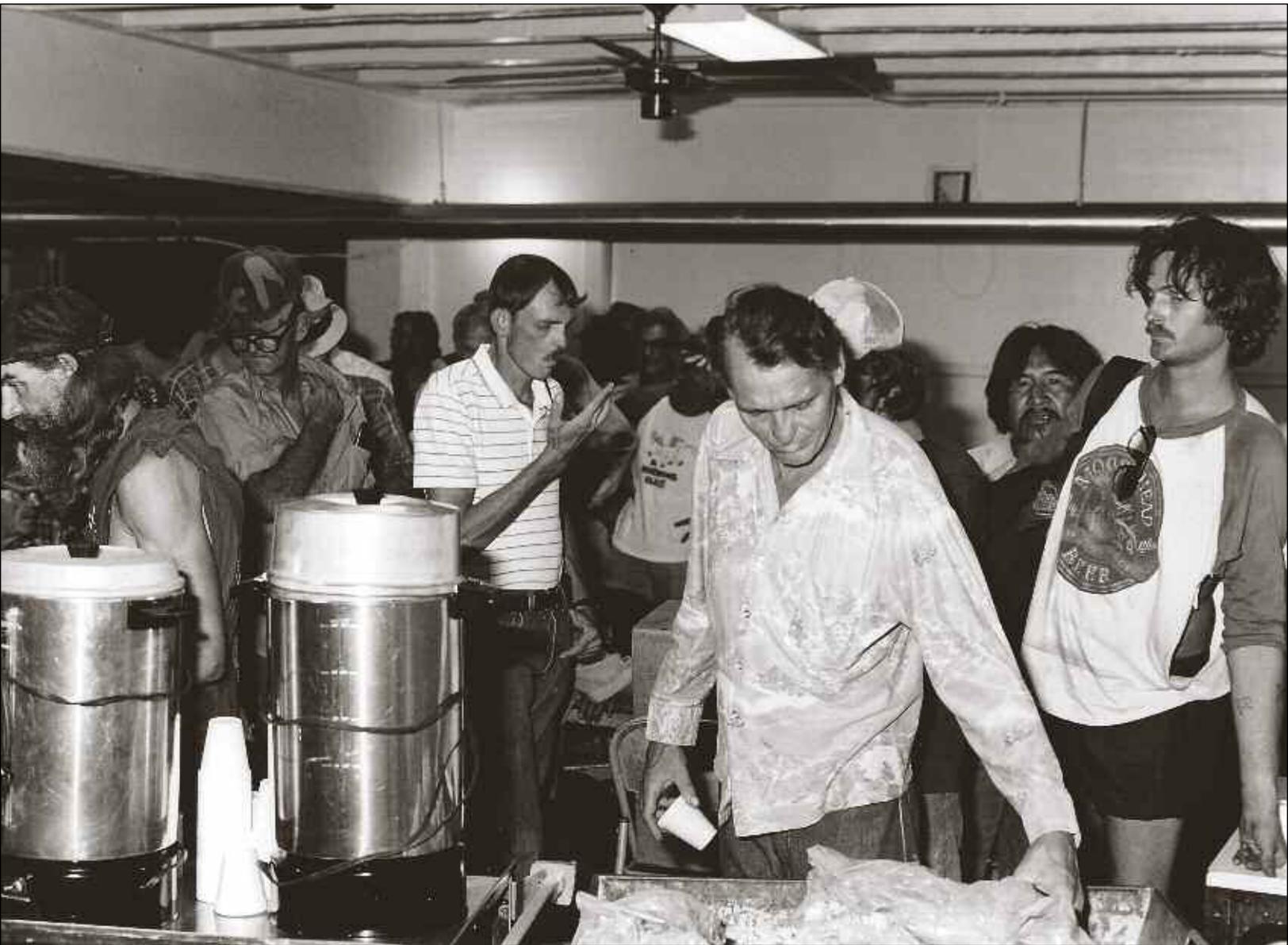
In 2002, using his tapes as building blocks, and working with a writer named Carlton Stowers, Carroll Pickett published a book called *Within These Walls: Memoirs of a Death House Chaplain* through St. Martin's Press. A couple of years later, the book came to the attention of two reporters from the *Chicago Tribune*, Steve Mills, and Maury Possley, who were writing a story about Carlos DeLuna—a young Texan who had been executed for a crime that Pickett was convinced he had not committed.

The reporters visited Pickett about that case, and subsequently contacted a Chicago documentary film company called Kartemquin about doing a documentary of Pickett's life. Filmmakers Steve James (“Hoop Dreams”) and Peter Gilbert (“Vietnam: Long Time Coming”) produced “At the Death House Door” for the Independent Film Channel, IFC. It debuted at the South by Southwest film festival in March 2008.

“After the film debuted,” Pickett says, “we started traveling all over the country, making appearances, showing the film, conducting question-and-answer sessions. Between March 5 and June 23, we had 375 interviews on radio and television stations, and with newspaper and magazine reporters. We even appeared before the House Judiciary Committee in Washington, D.C., at the request of the National Coalition Against the Death Penalty. The IFC set up all these interviews.”

Non-profit organizations interested in hosting a screening and discussion of “At the Death House Door” can get more information from www.ifc.com/atthedeathhousedoor. The film is available for download (\$3.99) on iTunes; check www.ifc.com for re-broadcast schedule and www.kartemquin.com for the DVD release date. Pickett's “Fresh Air” interview with Terry Gross is available on npr.org. For a list of the Reverend Pickett's upcoming appearances, e-mail budanne@hotmail.com.

First Presbyterian Church, Dallas, archival photo



“...as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.”

A brief history of the Stewpot at First Presbyterian Church, Dallas

BY ROBERT D. LIVELY (MDiv'73)

Eight miles to the south of Highland Park, one of the wealthiest residential sections in this country, lays an area which more closely resembles some backwater village in a developing nation. First Presbyterian Church of Dallas, in the heart of the area, has a front row view of a passing parade of issues stemming from the complex social problems of this big city, including a high crime rate and a nihilistic worldview born of abject poverty.

First Presbyterian Church's location, in fact, has given rise to two distinct gifts: (1) from its founding, this church has been graced by truly extraordinary leadership in both its laity and clergy, and (2) this grand old church has been blessed with challenges that have generated a creative tension regarding what, if any, faithful response to make. Through the years, First Presbyterian Church has earned the much-deserved reputation as a wise and reasonable prophetic voice. The Presbyterians who share a life together have long believed that God's way is expressed well in words of the prophet Amos who eight centuries before Jesus declared:

"Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5: 24, NRSV).

It was not raining righteousness on the January morning I interviewed with Dr. John F. Anderson Jr. (ThM'53) and a youth minister search committee, but it was definitely raining. As I arrived at the church, I spied an ancient, grizzled shell of a human perched on the curb—bony knees, stooped scarecrow shoulders. His wet head bounced up and down and slowly from right to left like the carriage on an old Remington typewriter—a rhythm suggesting he was gnawing on something, perhaps, a drumstick from a discarded box of fried chicken. The weight of his desperation struck me as strangely compelling, but I was not aware of the irony until I had parked the car in the church's parking lot. That's when it dawned on me that a man Jesus would have no doubt characterized as "the least of these" was eating garbage in the shadow of a church long respected for its genuine concern for the have-nots of this world. The thought

The author of several books, Robert Lively is a teacher in residence at First Presbyterian Church, Austin, and a regular contributor to the Austin American Statesman.

caused something deep within my soul to shift in the way a slight tremor in the Earth's crust moves a house-size boulder no more than a millimeter.

The interview with the search committee was perfunctory, at least from my point of view. Although I qualified for food stamps on the pitiful salary from the tiny college I served, there was no way I would ever consider becoming a youth minister. Back then, I was much too insecure and far too attached to the idol of prestige to consider, for even sixty seconds, giving up a college teaching position to babysit high school and middle school kids in the name of Jesus. No thank you!

But John Anderson said something that piqued my burgeoning narcissism. He leaned forward with a certain glint in his eye and said, "You can go anywhere else and read church history, or you can come here and help us make it." Me? Make church history? A man across the street gnaws on garbage and this pastor is speaking to me of making church history. What is this about? What is this pain in my heart?

Two weeks later, as I picked up the telephone to decline the church's invitation, the visage of the drenched beggar returned to haunt me. For the longest time I stared at what was not there as I lifted the phone's receiver to my ear, dialed the long-distance number, and said, "Yes, I'd be honored to be your next youth minister."

I began my ten-year tenure at First Church on April 1, 1975, and as I sat at my desk, I stared out at the bleak scene of the alley behind the Lone Star Gas Company. Several grizzled old men lined the alley, their backs pressed against a brick wall, snarling at each other while passing around a bottle I suspected had been purchased by a bit of half-hearted panhandling. I turned to my desk to compose on a sheet of notebook paper, "A Prayer for Beginnings." Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that what I was beginning would in a mere six months join me to those surly men and also to countless other desperate souls.

A short time later a call from my new colleague, Jack Moore (MDiv'60), a man whose writing in the *Presbyterian Survey* I'd admired for years, presented me with a challenge I didn't expect and was not at all sure I was up to. Jack asked, "Can you help me minister to some of our friends from the street?" Taken aback, I mumbled, "Well, I guess so." I descended the stairs to



find Jack standing with three tough hombres, all of whom bore face stubble sturdy enough to light a match. Grinning the way a master is prone to when testing a neophyte's mettle, Jack said, "Now son, minister to our friends here in the name of Jesus Christ." Stunned, I stood in the hallway studying Jack's hasty exit before returning my gaze to my new clients. Stammering, I asked, "What can I do for you gentlemen?" The spokesman, a large man with gray, closely cropped hair and breath that I judged flammable, announced, "Brother, we're hungry!"

I decided that swallowing my pride was by far the safest option. I excused myself and slipped through the open door of Jack's office where I spied him pretending to study. As I cleared my throat, he glanced up, feigning surprise, and said, "Yes?"

I responded, "Jack, those guys are hungry, what do I do?" His knowing smile annoyed me as he instructed me as to how to find the food pantry, which conveniently, at least from Jack's point of view, was located upstairs, not ten yards from my office in a small closet. Dutifully, I ascended the stairs with the alacrity of the schoolboy athlete I'd once been and picked out two cans for each of the three men. With a mixture of relief and sorrow, perhaps even shame, I handed that paper bag containing six cans of whatever might be in them to those men and returned to my office only to be alerted again by Jack that more clients awaited my attention.

No wonder these folks wanted a minister still in his twenties who might be sufficiently fit to make it up and down these stairs about a hundred times a day.

Only later would I come to appreciate Jack Moore for the spiritual giant he was, but during my first five months on the staff of First Dallas, I also resented him because I was running my legs off up and down those stairs, hauling bags of canned goods, two per customer with the labels removed with a razor blade so they might not be sold on the street in exchange for a little wine money. John Anderson had never mentioned that I might become a grocery clerk for Christ. And I certainly didn't attend seminary and pass all of the examinations in Greek, Hebrew, theology, and such, then jump



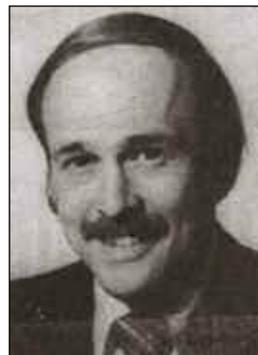
John Anderson (ThM'53)



Jack Moore (MDiv'60)



Fred Tulloch (MDiv'62)



Bob Lively (MDiv'73)

through the many hurdles required by ordination, simply to haul groceries.

Late one warm, mid-September morning, the office telephone rang once again signaling, of course, my next grocery run. Making my way down the stairs, I happened upon a man who appeared to be more wild than civilized squatted in a corner; his head bowed, his shaggy hair knotted and riddled with what appeared to be a full bushel of grass burrs. The stench he emitted was close to suffocating; what clothes he wore had been reduced to rags. His feet were bare and bleeding leaving smudges of blood upon the linoleum.

Out of the corner of my eye, I spied one of the church's secretaries frantically signaling for me to come to her. Cutting a wide circle around this foul-smelling beast, I approached the obviously agitated woman who said, "Make him go away!" I smiled and turned to face my latest client. "Can I help you," I asked. Apparently this man was too disordered to speak. Lifting his wide, blood-shot eyes scarcely high enough to meet mine, he slowly placed one filthy hand to parched lips.

"You're hungry," I more announced than asked. The wild man nodded slightly, still saying not a word.

I raced upstairs simply because I figured we needed to get this guy out of the church as soon as possible. The stench coming from him was fast becoming unbearable. Opening the food closet I discovered only two remaining cans, one containing sugar beets and the other filled with the kind of shredded coconut that good cooks spread gingerly upon the surface of a birthday cake.

Returning to the first floor, I handed both cans to my fragrant client who took the bag without a word. I paused to watch him sit alone on the curb and pry open with a pocketknife two cans containing beets and coconut flakes, placed in his hand by those who claimed Jesus as our Lord. As I pondered the tragic scene unfolding between two parked cars, I felt an unfamiliar ache in my heart. Immediately above me I could hear the sound of workmen assembling the expensive new sanctuary organ.

Did not Jesus admonish us seventeen

times in the four gospels to follow him? But did he ever command us to sing praises to God. No. But the Prophet Amos said, "Take away from me the noise of your songs" (Amos 5: 23, NRSV). And it was the Prophet Isaiah who made the connection between radical (meaning rooted) obedience to God and doing justice when he uttered these words in Jerusalem, "Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; and when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?" (Isaiah 58: 5-7, NRSV)

I was now angry, most of all at myself. "Why did I ever go into the ministry?" No convincing answer arrived, so I turned to find John Anderson. I'm not sure why I did this, except to say that I was angry.

I found him in his office poring over pages in a book. As he glanced up I said, "John, I'd like to show you something." If he was put off by my interruption, he didn't show it. Instead he followed me to the front door where I pointed to the disordered man finishing the sinfully meager lunch we had provided him. Coconut flakes clung to his beard like icicles in January.

I announced, "John, that man sitting out there on the curb came to us hungry, and in the name of Jesus Christ this church offered him two canned goods, labels removed. One small can contained beets and the other coconut."

I waited as John returned his gaze to study the poor beggar now attempting to rise on wobbly legs. Only because I figured that I was too deep into this confrontation with the pastor to back out, I pressed. "John, in Matthew's Gospel Jesus says (in paraphrase), 'Inasmuch as you've done it to the least of these, you've done it to me.'"

John nodded. A bit encouraged, I continued, "What we're doing is not right. Jesus clearly tells us to care for

these people, and we're not doing that."

One of the few gifts I do claim is intuition, and on this day I intuited that I'd said enough, so I left John at the door as one more time I climbed the stairs to close the door on an empty food closet. I returned to my desk, buried my face in my arms, and wept. Without question, my tears were more for myself than for the hungry man.

At this point I stepped back from the planning that would later be inspired by the Holy Spirit to evolve into the Stewpot. The three who deserve the credit for this ministry's founding are of course John Anderson, Jack Moore, but most of all the Holy Spirit. After all, I was a youth minister with zero political clout. But on that day I did decide one thing--either this church would do something for the hungry, or I'd leave before the year ended. I could not imagine spending another six months running up and down those stairs. But even more, I was not sure that I could bring myself to be a part of a congregation who could invest one-half million (1975) dollars in an organ but could not find it within their hearts to feed the hungry with any more than an allotment of two cans of food, labels removed.

I was not privy to the details of those conversations between John and Jack, but sometime in the next few weeks Jack Moore, a man who could sell buggy whips in Detroit, went quietly to work. The session commission he served was then known as the Service Commission, and in 1975 it was composed of nine members. Somehow, Jack convinced five of the nine members to vote to open a soup kitchen. A simple majority was all he needed and this gifted man got it because Jack was both trusted and greatly loved by the congregation he served so faithfully.

Prior to my arrival in Dallas, John Anderson had artfully melded the church's diaconate into the session with one result being that a particular commission could act

First Presbyterian Church, Dallas, archival photo



for the entire session within the context of its assigned responsibilities. I remain convinced that if the decision to found the Stewpot had been deliberated by the entire session, the idea would have failed. But because of John's foresight and Jack's diligence, the motion did pass, much to the chagrin of a few elders who were quick to point out the several disasters just waiting to happen. But who could blame them? This church had never done this kind of thing before; and let's face facts, for good or ill, Presbyterians are by nature a cautious lot. (As it happened, the session would speak by disallowing the use of any of the church's tables and chairs.)

We opened the door to the homeless in late October with Jack, Fred Tulloch (M.Div.'62), and me serving as hosts and with two church members working as volunteers in the tiny kitchen. I watched with equal measures of eagerness and angst as these two men poured beef stew from two number 10 cans into two small pans. Would we have enough? What would we do if a throng arrived? What is a riot broke out? What if ... I decided against any further worry and instead stepped outside where I found perhaps a dozen homeless men waiting peacefully and patiently on the Harwood Street sidewalk. I spoke a word of welcome before informing them that we would open

the door promptly at noon.

At noon I pulled open the Harwood Street door to find about thirty-five or forty men waiting to enjoy the Stewpot's inaugural meal. Within minutes we were done in the sense that we were out of stew. The men dropped their discarded paper bowls, plastic spoons, and cups into a trash barrel and departed as peacefully as they had arrived. We had done it. There had been no incidents, no pillaging, no riots. There was only a prayer followed by a peaceful and near silent meal offered to men who, almost to a person, paused to thank us in mumbles and nods.

Two realities became apparent to me that day: (1) we could do this thing, and (2) the \$900 in the church budget marked for hunger would not last long, perhaps not even a week.

The third day I pulled open the heavy Harwood Street door and was stunned to find an attractive woman attired in a suit standing with the crowd of homeless folks, whose number was now close to 100. She smiled, extended her hand, and introduced herself as Helen

Continued on page 14

The Stewpot today

The Stewpot served its 2,500,000th meal on January 14, 2008. Beyond meals, though, the ministry has evolved into a model health and human service provider for the city of Dallas, collaborating with twenty-seven other social service groups. Some of the programs it offers include: dental, medical, and eye clinics; substance abuse counseling; ID cards; on-site access to mental health services and AIDS testing; enrichment programs for at-risk children and youth; access to a mailing address and free voicemail; and an art and writing program.

By 2007 the profusion of the city's homeless in the downtown area prompted a new city ordinance, forcing them off the sidewalks outside the Stewpot. In response to the sight of a bulldozer scooping up the homeless people's worldly possessions, the church allowed them to sleep in its parking lot. "Obviously a parking lot is inadequate housing for human beings, but it was a safe, temporary solution," said Austin Seminary Trustee Joe Clifford, pastor of First Presbyterian. "It also called the city on their decision to conduct the sweep without providing a place for people to go. We ended up creating a partnership with the city to open a temporary shelter throughout the winter and pay for available shelter beds the homeless could not afford. By God's grace, it worked out for everyone."

The Reverend Bruce Buchanan, associate pastor of First Presbyterian Church and executive director of the Stewpot, said that though there have been complaints over the years about the presence of the homeless downtown, there also has been substantial support, including donations that fund the agency's \$1.5 million annual budget.

In May 2008, the Stewpot moved its meal service operation to The Bridge, a \$21 million city-operated resource center where, for the first time, the more than 5000 homeless and hungry of Dallas County have access to services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. First Presbyterian Church now serves three meals a day with paid staff and up to 400 volunteers. It takes them all; they served a record 2,461 meals one day in June!



Lee Hutchins

Volunteers have always been vital to the success of the Stewpot.

“Umble Pie”

BY CYNTHIA L. RIGBY

Micah 6 makes it sound so simple. I can almost imagine God speaking with that tone a mother uses with a teenager who doesn't want to spend Saturday evening at Aunt Bessie's. "It's not like I ask for much," I hear God saying. "It's not like I'm asking you for burnt offerings, or calves, or rams, or oil, or your *first born*—for pete's sake. All I want you to do is be just, and kind, and humble."

And there—somewhere in the background of the scene—stand we goody-goody GA-attending types. Mother's request seems reasonable enough, we think, and so we make ourselves useful by scooping up the hospitality gift Bundt cake, slipping past our protesting sibling, and heading for the car.

Most of us, on most days, are *willing* to meet God's requirements. Many of us, on some days, have actually *tried* to meet them and—well—we've run into a few problems. They're easier said than done, as it turns out, because God isn't very specific about what it is, exactly, that we are supposed to *do*. As a seminary professor, I could never get away with giving an assignment as all-encompassing and abstract as Micah 6:8. "What do you mean by 'justice'?" my students would rightly ask. "And 'kindness'? And 'walking humbly'? Do you want us to put what *you* think, what *we* think, or what *Calvin* thinks? How about footnotes? And what will you do to us if we go over the page limit?"

I think it's even harder to get a foothold in "walking humbly with your God" than it is to grasp "justice" and "kindness." At least, when it comes to "justice," we have some idea what it is we should be arguing about. The war in Iraq, the displaced persons in New Orleans and in



PNS / Danny Bolin

China, violence in Zimbabwe, global warming, rising food prices, and the inequitable distribution of global resources—no one would disagree that we need to find more just approaches to these issues. And we all have a feel for "kindness," whether we concentrate on practicing random acts of it, or recognize its presence in nurturing communities, or evoke it to identify the twinkle in Saint Nicholas's crinkly eyes. But this requirement that we "walk humbly" is a lot harder to get our minds—and our hearts—around. What is "humility," exactly? Clearly, it's something that makes us feel uncomfortable. You can tell by the way we distance ourselves from it with jokes—you know, like: "I'm very *proud* of my humility" and that sort of thing. Or we try to escape our discomfort by treating humility as though it is a gift had by a select few, rather than a requirement of us all.

On the rare occasions when we really do try to imagine genuine "humility," we tend to associate it with being doormat-ish. The humble person is the faceless one, the serving one, the one who doesn't seem aware of her or his talents and would never think to worry about being self-fulfilled. And there's something about our impression of what it means to be "humble" that we know isn't quite right. Whatever "walking humbly with our God" is about, surely it can't contradict what it means to have a

Cynthia L. Rigby is the W. C. Brown Professor of Theology at Austin Seminary. She delivered this sermon at the 218th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on June 26, 2008. The texts for the sermon were Micah 6:8, Numbers 11:1-9, and Philippians 2:1-16.

strong and centered identity as children who belong to God in life and in death.

The Israelites did a lot of walking, but they were not always humble. They, like us, often lost track of the fact that they were God's chosen people, and for understandable reasons. As good as the manna tasted, the Israelites got tired of it after a couple of decades. The sweet, olive-y taste of the manna cakes—year in, and year out—only fed their yearning for fresh fish, crunchy cucumbers, juicy melons, and leeks, onions, and garlic. Hanging around in the desert, filled with such mouth-watering memories might have been a little like waiting endlessly for food in a restaurant. The Israelites were hungry for the delicious things they smelled, but all the waiter would do was refill their basket with rolls.

What does the Israelites' experience teach us about our "walking humbly with God"? Could it possibly be that we are called to go without cucumbers for extended periods of time? Is the point, really, that we should be satisfied with rolls, putting aside our yearning for dinner? Certainly not! we are inclined to think. Surely God has nothing against a satisfied palate. While our "official" position, as sophisticated Presbyterians, is that the "name it and claim it" mentality of prosperity Christianity is ill-founded,

we also resist the other, ascetical extreme. We might not believe God wants us rich, but we do believe God desires to bless us with garlicky pasta and "big salads" with lots of stuff, and so we feel free to enjoy. The Israelites would have been crazy to deny themselves fish and fruit and vegetables, if God had provided them. And we—we who are gathered together here, in this place—generally find ourselves surrounded by such options, even in this day of rising food prices. It's a strange thing, I think, that I can fairly assume every person sitting here either ate a cucumber for lunch, or could have eaten a cucumber (if they had really wanted to). Of course we know—although we generally live as though we don't know—that most people in history, and most people living on Planet Earth today, are not surrounded by the perpetual plenitude that most of us here today have come to take for granted.

One of the interesting things about manna, as you might be aware, is that every person was entitled to exactly the same amount per day. That's all that could be collected; anything extra would rot. If any family was

harboring an illegal slave, and tried to collect a portion of manna for that slave, their efforts would be in vain and their crime found out. So manna was thought to be a great equalizer. One could not get ahead of one's neighbor by working harder than another, or storing up for a rainy day, or developing more efficient harvesting techniques. In both the food and the size of its portion the people shared together. In its daily collection and preparation the people joined in the work of feeding, the work which sustained. God got angry when the people complained about manna, I suspect, not because they yearned for a greater variety of things to eat. God got mad because the Israelites disparaged their own manna-gathering community in favor of the "Egypt" from which they had been freed.

Philippians 2 confirms that walking with God has something to do with leaving the oppressive systems of Egypt behind and instead building communities characterized by justice, kindness, and humility. According to Paul, we as Christian believers should "regard others as better than" ourselves. "Let this mind be among you that was in Christ Jesus," he instructs, explaining that Christ "did not consider equality with God something to be grasped" but instead "humbled himself" by entering

into existence and obeying God, even to the point of death.

Needless to say, Paul is here setting the bar pretty high (or—should we say—pretty low!), when it comes to the humility standard. What would it look like for us to have the mind of Christ, as Paul describes it? Certainly, it must be that to walk humbly with the God who has entered fully and humbly into relationship with us is to enter fully and humbly into relationship with each other. And to enter fully and humbly into relationship with each other is, inevitably, to sacrifice some of what we might be able to do and to be if we didn't have to take the other into account. It is to put aside "being all we can be" in favor of submitting to whom—and what—that other person is. It is to kneel down with them and collect our allotted portion of manna, day after day, without looking over our shoulder at ways we might gain on them, benefit from them, or even rescue them.

Well, now, this sounds pretty passive and doormat-ish—doesn't it? Not very world-changing. It is generally our preference—I certainly know it is mine—to skip the

Waking up every morning and collecting the manna, or changing the diaper, or heading for another round of hospital visitation. Again. And doing these things not because it is our obligation to do them, but because we genuinely love this world as God loves it, is a tall order.

manna collection scene altogether and go straight for a better menu. To import some cucumbers; to go out of our way to help and to change. Isn't this why so many of us went into ministry to begin with? Isn't this why we are here at the GA? Regardless of our differences on some of the issues, all of us are here because we want to do more than simply describe the world. The point is—really—to change it.¹ But here's the basic rub, I think, when it comes to humility: we are called to change the world not by focusing on change, but by abiding in Christ. When we focus on change, humility is displaced by the more important work of “doing things” for people. When we share in the mind of Christ, however, the things that we do for others are merely an extension of our being-for-and-with them. Like those dumb, humble sheep in Matthew 25, we don't even remember that we have fed and clothed and visited.² (This makes it a lot harder to write our “Institutional Effectiveness Reports,” but it is more truly Christ-like).

“Let this mind be among you that is in Christ Jesus.” While Jesus' life had a revolutionary impact, he never aimed to be a revolutionary.³ The point, for Jesus, was neither to describe the world nor to change it, but simply to love it. The humility manifested in Jesus Christ challenges any inclination we might have to think of the incarnation as a kind of “divine rescue operation.” It is not that the second person of the Trinity is taking on a mission assignment given to him by the Father. His self-emptying is not a strategy he employs merely to get his foot in the door of our creaturely existence so he can show us the way. As Søren Kierkegaard points out, the prince doesn't simply disguise himself as a pauper in order to woo us, the underprivileged maiden. Rather, the prince *is* the pauper. He gathers manna with us because he needs to eat. He shares with us the “umble pie” we have baked from scraps that are ready at hand. And he never, at any point, flings off his full humanity because it has served its purpose and is, therefore, over and done with. The exaltation borne witness to in Philippians 2 is anything but the moment the prince sets aside his humility, revealing his true identity to the delight of the maiden who loves him, and who loved him even when she thought he was only a pauper. Don't you see? It is the *pauper* the maiden knows. It is the *pauper* she loves. If the pauper is only a disguise, the maiden will only feel manipulated and disappointed. She cannot be pleased if she has truly loved and been betrayed; she can only distance herself from the lie.

It is as a *pauper* that Christ lifts us into the trembling-inducing reality of partnership, and power, and transformation. It is through being with-and-for us in

our everyday, manna-collecting lives that he mystically becomes our manna. We eat his body, we drink his blood, our comings and goings and doings are grounded not in a particular agenda, but in his life as it extends outward, into the world. And change? Well: change happens from this place of abiding, and we are essential to it. “Therefore,” writes Paul, “work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you to will and to work for God's good purpose.”

I may already have gotten in too deep with this sexist, medieval “prince” and “maiden” language Kierkegaard uses. So I might as well sin even more boldly, stay with the theme, and bring a knight and a dragon into play. Knights and dragons are pretty big in our house, these days, with my four-and-a-half-year-old son and my two-and-a-half-year-old daughter. We spend a lot of time playing with our toy dragons, reading our dragon books, and engaging in some deep analytical discussion about the difference between dinosaurs and dragons. (Dinosaurs are *real* but *extinct*; Dragons are *pretend* but *not* extinct.) As we sit in our living room doing all this, my eye is occasionally drawn to a work of art Bill and I bought when I was pregnant with Alexander and wondering if I'd be able to handle all the self-emptying things I would be called upon to do as a new mother. The piece is by artist Brian Andreas. It features a picture of a knight along with the following statement: “Anyone can slay a dragon,” he told me, “but try waking up every morning and loving the world all over again. That's what takes a real hero.”

Waking up every morning and collecting the manna, or changing the diaper, or heading for another round of hospital visitation. Again. And doing these things not because it is our obligation to do them, but because we genuinely love this world, even as God loves it, every day anew. To love the world with such tenacity is, of course, a tall (maybe even an impossible) order. There are those of us who on many days have trouble simply fulfilling our obligations, never mind freely engaging them in love. But still Jesus stands in the background, waiting ... hoping ... asking us the question, again: “Do you love me?” The feeding of the lambs and tending of the sheep that takes place in the course of our humble walking is meant not to be a burden on us, but to be an extension of love.

Liberation theologians have encouraged us along these lines for quite some time. Try as we might to convince them, they just won't let us rich people think it's enough that we send our money, cucumbers, or whatever other extra resources we have in the direction of the poor. Rescue operations, they remind us, are of little

long-term value to the poor and are utterly useless for redeeming the rich. What the poor want is for the rich to join with them, to partner with them, to learn from and be corrected by their spirituality. It is not simply that the rich need to quit giving fish to the poor (so they'll eat for a day) and instead *teach* them to fish (so they'll eat for a lifetime), as the old adage goes. It is that the rich need to sit down with the poor and join in the fishing. To empty themselves and enter into solidarity with the other. To learn to love the world, each morning, all over again.

I once heard Letty Russell say something that slices right into our ambivalent relationship with humility. She said that the problem with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is that we are *of* the world, but not *in* it. As I recall, Russell had just announced that she was giving up her ordination as a protest against what she identified as the "creeping clericalism" of the church. While we claim to uphold the "priesthood of all believers," Russell argued, we actually and hypocritically reinforce the hierarchies that perpetuate Empire.⁴

Of the world, but not *in* it. Could it be that we are missing out on enjoying the manna that is right under our shoes because our out-of-control appetites are driving us toward Egypt? In what ways are we buying into the creation of systems and agendas that keep us from being with-and-for one another even as God, in Christ, is with-and-for us?

We have the opportunity, right now and again every day, to repent of our complicity in the destructive systems of the world. We should not repent because we hate the world, but because we desire to be more fully in it—to love the world the way God loves it.

May God grant us the grace to share together in the mind of Christ. To empty ourselves of privilege that stands in our way of being with and for one another. To look at one another as better than ourselves, and take others' interests into account. To will and to work for God's good purpose as those who are amazed at what God is up to, astounded that we are fully included in Christ. May we come to know, ever more deeply, the joy of walking humbly with our God. AMEN. ▲

NOTES

1 This plays on a famous quote from Karl Marx: "The point is not to describe the world, but to change it."

2 This point draws from an insight of Bill Greenway in a Sunday School class he taught at University Presbyterian Church in Austin several years ago.

3 See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 13 vols (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1936-1969), IV/2.

4 I am recalling this from a presentation I heard Dr. Russell give in 1996 or 1997, at a conference on justice held at the Plaza Resolana in Sante Fe, New Mexico.

The Stewpot

Continued from page 10

Parmley, the religion editor of the *Dallas Morning News*. I couldn't imagine what had brought such a distinguished woman to our door, but even before I could frame the question she provided the answer.

"My photographer and I were driving by this morning and saw people lining up, so I thought we should investigate," she said.

"Welcome," I said as though I was accustomed to greeting the media.

"What is this place?" she asked.

"It's the First Presbyterian Church," I answered.

"I know that," she continued. "But what are you doing?"

"Ma'am, we're feeding the homeless, and we call this the Stewpot."

With that said, I wisely abandoned the door to find Jack. Ms. Parmley interviewed Jack and John Anderson while her photographer snapped photos. The first week in November of 1975, the *Dallas Morning News* ran a front-page story of the founding of the Stewpot, and as a result, this new ministry rolled suddenly beyond fledgling into the status of somewhat established. The Stewpot would still experience funding challenges in the next few years, but the idea had definitely taken hold. As a result of Ms. Parmley's story, approximately 10,000 unsolicited dollars—and at least one offer of a cow—were donated to the Stewpot, and with this new influx of unexpected funds, Jack purchased ten tables and 100 metal folding chairs.

In time, the Stewpot would evolve into one of Dallas' most respected institutions. In fact, on my final day on the pastoral staff of First Church, then Mayor Stark Taylor stated in a proclamation passed by the City Council that the Stewpot had raised the consciousness of an entire city regarding the needs of the poor and the homeless.

The Holy Spirit deserves the lion's share of the credit, but without John Anderson, Jack Moore, Fred Tulloch, the likes of members W.C. Ferrell and Marshall Kendred, and five elders willing to risk, the Stewpot would never have happened. As for me, I was only a witness. But the privilege of seeing first-hand and up-close the birth of something beautiful for God will, I suspect, remain the great mountaintop experience of my life. I know that for the past thirty years nothing has surpassed the thrill of pulling open the church's door that October day and saying a word of welcome to the city's homeless, and, perhaps, even to the very man who only ten months earlier I'd seen eating garbage in the rain. ▲

Zambian colleague addresses graduates

The Reverend Dr. Devison T. Banda, principal of Justo Mwale Theological College in Lusaka, Zambia, a sister school of Austin Seminary, delivered the address at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary's commencement on Sunday, May 25. Fifty-seven students received degrees: forty-four, the Master of Divinity; seven, the Master of Arts (Theological Studies); and six, the Doctor of Ministry.

Principal Banda has a bachelor of theology degree from Justo Mwale and a masters, PhD, and an honors degree from the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa. In addition to his current position as principal (president) of the college, he is a lecturer in New Testament. Banda has served as a full-time congregational minister in the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ). His work has been published in *Reading the Bible with African Eyes*.

Commencement exercises also include the granting of special awards to graduating seniors who have distinguished themselves in five areas. **Meredith Kemp-Pappan** received the Charles L. King Preaching Award for excellence in preaching. It was named in honor of the late Dr. Charles L. King, former pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Houston for many years. As one who has made significant contributions to cross-cultural and interracial relationships, **Ruth Martin** was presented with the



Principal Banda visits with Old Testament Professor Andy Dearman and his wife, Kathy, after the commencement ceremony. Dearman was instrumental in initiating the deep relationship between Austin Seminary and Justo Mwale Theological College.

Rachel Henderlite Award, named for Austin Seminary professor of Christian education and the first woman ordained in the PCUS. The John Spragens Award was established to honor a former Austin Seminary professor of Christian education and dean of students; **Rebecca Chancellor** is the 2008 recipient. **Ryan Kemp-Pappan** was granted the Hendrick-Smith Award for Evangelism and Missions for his commitment to the field; the award was created to honor Professor Emeritus **John R. "Pete" Hendrick**. The Donald Capps Award, established to honor the William Harte Felmeth Professor of Pastoral Psychology at Princeton Theological Seminary, was given to **Emily Richardson Owen** for her gifts for and commitment to the church's caring ministries.

Other awards included the 2008 Ada and Adams Calhoun Award to **Pepa Paniagua**, the 2008 Carl Kilborn Book Award to **Ryan Jensen**, the Chalice Press Book Award to **Derek Forbes**, and the Westminster Shorter Catechism

Awards to **Alice Hernandez** and **Mark Renn**.

The Reverend **Louis H. Zbinden Jr.**, formerly the pastor of San Antonio's First Presbyterian Church and now the Louis H. and Katherine S. Zbinden Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Leadership at Austin Seminary, preached during the baccalaureate service on Saturday, May 24; the Reverend Dr. **Michael Jinkins**, academic dean and professor of pastoral theology, presided at the Lord's Table. Both baccalaureate and commencement events were held at University Presbyterian Church, Austin.

*Advent Reflections
from the
Austin
Seminary
Community*

in this season

*Would you like to share
our Advent Devotional
with your congregation?
Order now at:
www.austinseminary.edu*



BY THEODORE J. WARDLAW

The following is not a paid political announcement; but in this overheated election season, you may think it is. No, it's simply my attempt this year, for the sixth year in a row, to offer my annual charge to the graduating class—a privilege granted, year after year, to the president of Austin Seminary; and I have discovered that it's one of the most cherished things each year that I am called upon to do.

But this year, I can't discharge this responsibility without dragging into this sacred space and this high moment the clamor of politics as we lurch toward our next presidential election; and one of the key themes of the clamor this year is that words are cheap. Google "Election season and words," and you're likely to get this sampling of American opinion: "War of words," "Pretty words are not going to save this country from its downward spiral," "So-and-so has offered nothing but pretty words and promises," "We expect more of a politician than pretty words," "Now is not the time to be blown away by pretty words," "Look at the record and do not be

enthralled with words," "Actions speak louder than words," "...big talkers, pretty words," "...just a bunch of pretty words with not much to back it up," "Candidate A is trying to twist Candidate B's words."

We've spent eighteen months so far listening to this; and, since here at this Seminary we're in the words business, I'm surprised, frankly, that you all stuck it through—that you're here this afternoon, willing, apparently, to accept a diploma from this place—having heard, if you've been paying attention, that words are so cheap in our culture.

Moreover, to be honest, words have been cheap for a good long time. Even people of faith, when reflecting seriously about the faith, have nourished—for decades, centuries, millennia—a theological skepticism about words. In the narthex of the chapel at Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta, there is a large, framed work of art done in charcoal. It's a sort of cartoon, really, that hangs there in the narthex, just across from the door through which people exit when they are leaving worship. They come into the chapel, they worship,

they sing, they pray, someone preaches, they take communion; and then, when they leave, they see that big caricature or cartoon. On the left side of that framed work of art, someone is preaching behind a pulpit, and then, covering the rest of the space, almost like a black cloud, in different sizes and types of print is one single word written over and over again. Hundreds of times it's written. The word is: "Words." Out of that preacher's mouth: words, words, words, words, words, words, words, words. The whole surface of that charcoal work is covered with the word "Words." Truthfully, I'm not sure whether the artist is trying to be cynical or to issue an admonition. It may be up to you as to how you interpret it. You may decide, with so much of the rest of the culture, that the message of that piece of art is that words are cheap, that it's as if he's saying "Blah, blah, blah." Or you may take it as a warning to use words carefully, since your words are pretty much all that you have. I'm assuming that, since that piece of art is hanging in a seminary chapel narthex, then that's the interpretation they've chosen.

Someone wrote it this way

once: “Financiers have capital, physicians have medicines, farmers have seed and soil, soldiers have guns; Christians have words.” And even in the words business, we nourish a theological skepticism about words; and that’s important, frankly. So that, of all people, St. Francis of Assisi once said, “Preach the gospel at all times; if necessary, use words.” The point I think he was pushing was that we are not just about the gift of gab—but rather that we should forever be measuring our words for their weight and authenticity and truth. Not “truthiness,” as Stephen Colbert might say, but truth.

Who in the world has ever gone through life doing that so successfully that, in the final analysis, he didn’t just use words—he embodied them? Well, you know who. “In the beginning was the Word,” writes St. John, “and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it ... And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory ... full of grace and truth.”

Almost at the beginning of time, as we remember our story theologically, the weight of our words was stolen—by the serpent who turned truth into truthiness, and thus set off a chain reaction that rattled through the ages, all the way down through history until that moment when the Word became flesh and lived among us, and in so doing gave us our words back—full of grace and truth.

So, if you’re serious about the

words business, then I charge you to resolve to use your words carefully. Everybody out there is going to be listening for what those words are made of: can they be trusted, or are they just pretty? The trick with our words is often that they can stir, they can arouse passion, they can incite action, they can prove to be powerful. But will your words embody the Word? I charge you to weigh your words every day, until, with God’s help, they become full of grace and truth, and, little by little, so do you.

You won’t always know when that happens, by the way. You’ll just think you’re uttering words. “Friends, believe the Good News of the gospel: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.” “I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord.” “The body of Christ, the bread of heaven; the blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.” “Go and sin no more.” “The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” I promise you that sometimes you will utter those words, and, especially near vacation time, may even in that moment be thinking, “Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah,” while somewhere in your presence, in somebody’s heart, the doors to the Kingdom of God are swinging open and bells are ringing, and life—perhaps for the first time—is starting to make sense.

At the beginning of my ministry, when I was in Memphis, Tennessee, I had a friend—a graduate of this Seminary, actually, named Jack White—who was pastor of an inner-city church there; and he told me once of standing at the door, greeting parishioners one Sunday, and a young woman lingered until everybody else had left. She wanted a word with him. He told me that she said that she had never been to that church before. She said that she had been particularly moved by

the Confession of Sin and the Declaration of Pardon. Jack White told me that she said, “All my life, my parents said I was shiftless and no good and would never amount to anything.” Said, “Teachers told me that I was lazy and undisciplined, and used me as an example of what the other kids should try to avoid.” Said, “Boyfriends would tell me they loved me and make promises they didn’t keep. But today,” she said, “during what you call the Declaration of Pardon, you told me something different. You told me that I was a child of God.”

Are those just pretty words? No.

My friend Tom Long, whose books you have read and who will be next year’s Currie Lecturer, once wrote: “My uncle Ed ran an American Oil service station in a small town in South Carolina. He was a wonderful man. He hunted and fished and told loud, uproarious jokes and people loved him. While he was still a young man, his big heart failed him, and the family gathered for the funeral. I was a young teenager at the time,” he writes. “The minister at Ed’s church was on vacation, and despite assurances from the family that he needn’t come back for the service, he insisted and interrupted his time away to return.

“[This minister] drove half the night and all the next morning, arriving just in time to come by the family home and to accompany us to the church for the funeral. I will never forget his arrival. Indeed, as I look back on it now, it created in me one of the first stirrings toward ministry. The family was all together in the living room of Ed’s home, and through the big picture window we saw the minister arrive. He got out of his stripped-down Ford, all spindle-legged, wearing a cheap blue

Continued on page 21

The Class of 2008

Key to **Masters** degree entries: graduate's name and denomination (presbytery or conference under care); first call / placement or future plans.

Master of Arts (Theological Studies) • MATS • Master of Arts

Linda J. Berard, United Church of Christ; CPE chaplain residency (one year), Seton Family of Hospitals, Austin, Texas



Adam T. Carrington, African Methodist Episcopal; pastor, Union Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Cedar Creek, Texas



Stephen C. Cheney, Roman Catholic; seeking a position



Fred D. "Dan" Cross, PC(USA); seeking a position



David Lee Hulsey Jr., PC(USA); pastoral assistant, First Presbyterian Church, Georgetown, Texas



Aron Kocsis, Hungarian Reformed Church; graduates studies, Master of Divinity, Reformed Theology of Debrecen, Hungary



Jonathan "Jack" E. Worthy, United Methodist Church; organizing pastor, The Evening Services (Independent NCD), Austin, Texas, and MSSW studies, The University of Texas at Austin




Gregory "Greg" D. Amen, Indian Nations Presbytery; pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Reno, Oklahoma



Josyph "Joe" A. Andrews, Mission Presbytery; campus minister, Presbyterian Pan American School, Kingsville, Texas



Vicki B. Averitt, UMC, Texas Annual Conference; associate pastor, Christ United Methodist Church, College Station, Texas



Kathleen E. Brinegar, Cascades Presbytery; CPE chaplain residency (summer), Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital, Houston, Texas; seeking a call



Matthew "Matt" Glen Calvert, Grace Presbytery; CPE chaplain residency (one year) Parkland Health and Hospital System, Dallas, Texas



Rebecca E. Chancellor, Mission Presbytery; director of youth and children's ministries, University Presbyterian Church, Austin, Texas



Brian C. Dees, Grace Presbytery; Master of Theology studies, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland

Master of Divinity • MDiv • Master of Divinity • MDiv • Master of Divinity • MDiv • Divinity • MDiv

Adam C. Smith, Grace Presbytery; director of youth and college ministries, Memorial Presbyterian Church, St. Augustine, Florida



Gregory “Greg” S. Tatman, Cascades Presbytery; completing candidacy process

Teresa “Teri” Summers-Minette, New Covenant Presbytery; seeking a call



Linda Whitworth-Reed, Grace Presbytery, pastoral extern, First Presbyterian Church, McAllen, Texas; completing candidacy process

Key to Doctor of Ministry degree entries: graduate’s name, current position; title of doctoral project.

James M. Cantey, Pastor, Elmira Chapel Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Longview, Texas; “Interpreting Christian Weddings: Equipping My Congregation to Understand and Embrace Reformed Concepts of Christian Nuptial Rites”



Beth Marie Halvorsen, Pastor, Lord of Life Lutheran Church, The Woodlands, Texas; “Humility, Boldness, Surrender, and Tenacity: A Model of Centered Flexibility That Helps Pastors Increase Self Differentiation”

Peter K. Christy, Pastor, Church at Horseshoe Bay, Horseshoe Bay, Texas; “Telling the Old Story in Old Stories: Story Preaching to Retired Persons in Era-Specific Stories”



Ruth Jeanne Lutz, Pastor, Peace Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, New Mexico; “Explaining the Basic Doctrine, Worship, and Polity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to Episcopalians: A Written Guide and Educational Event”

Debra Carl Freeman, Pastor, Westover Hills Presbyterian Church, Little Rock, Arkansas; “The Work of the People: Understanding and Embracing the Dynamic Relationship Between Christian Worship and Christian Service”



Gregg Donald Townsend, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church of North East, Erie, Pennsylvania; “Witness to the Resurrection: Planning and Leading Funerals for Unchurched Persons”

Charge

Continued from page 17

suit, clutching his service book like a life preserver. Now that I am a minister myself,” Tom writes, “I think I know what was going through his mind as he approached the house: ‘What to say? Dear God, what to say? What words do you speak when words seem hardly enough?’

“What he did not know, could

not know, is how the atmosphere in that living room changed the moment we saw him step out of his car. It was anticipation, but more than that. His arrival was, in its own way, a call to worship. This frail human being, striding across the lawn in his off-the-rack preacher suit, desperately trying to find some words of meaning to speak, brought with him, by the grace of God, the

presence of Christ. In his presence and in his words—words, words, words—was the living Word.”¹

So may it be for each one of you, as you go from here resolved to speak and to embody living words—words full of grace and truth.

NOTE

¹Thomas G. Long, *Whispering the Lyrics*, pp. 37-38.



Frierson's life a portrait of service

Trustee Emeritus **Clarence N. Frierson**, who served on Austin Seminary's Board for two decades, died April 26. Frierson was a trustee from 1975-83, 1985-94, and 1995-97; he chaired the board during the time of transition between Presidents Maxwell and Stotts. The Louisiana cotton planter was a dedicated churchman, serving as an elder commissioner to the General Assembly and a moderator of the

Presbytery of Red River; he was a member of First Presbyterian Church, Shreveport. At his memorial service, The Reverend John B. Rogers, a former trustee of Austin Seminary, spoke of Frierson's faith in action, particularly as evidenced by his devotion to theological education:

Clarence made an extraordinary contribution in the life and leadership of the church's institutions, especially her theological seminaries, and most especially Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary where he served with distinction for many years as trustee, chairman of the board, and trustee emeritus. His faith fueled Clarence's own deep conviction that the quality of her ministerial leadership was absolutely crucial to the health, strength, and integrity of the church's life and mission. Indeed, that the gospel of Jesus Christ must be thoughtfully proclaimed, clearly articulated, and faithfully demonstrated in the life of the congregation and community made Clarence a perfect choice to be involved in the governance of a theological seminary charged with the preparation of men and women for ministry. And Austin Seminary was the beneficiary of that dedication.

Frierson's contributions to Austin Seminary were profound and substantial. When First Presbyterian Church, Shreveport, made the decision to establish the D. Thomason Chair in New Testament Studies in the early 1990s, Frierson was a crucial liaison between church and seminary. In 2005 Frierson's family joined with the family of Professor **John Alsup** to endow the Alsup-Frierson Fellowship to encourage a graduating senior who has demonstrated excellence in the field of biblical studies.

In an essay on the office of Ruling Elder for the *Presbyterian Outlook* recently, Austin Seminary President Ted Wardlaw reflected on the life and witness of Clarence Frierson. "Ruling Elders," he wrote, "are not, at their best, merely 'officers' who 'serve a term.' They are people summoned to a vocation. They reflect that Light of the world. They throw seed into the soil of their surroundings, they pray for growth, and they measure the results against the rule that is calibrated by the gospel."

The family has suggested that memorial gifts in memory of Clarence Frierson may be made to the Alsup-Frierson Fellowship Fund at Austin Seminary.



Carr to lead board

Only the second woman to do so, **Cassandra Carr** became chair of Austin Seminary's Board of Trustees on May 24. Currently a senior advisor with Public Strategies Inc, Carr spent the majority of her career at SBC Communications Inc., rising to Senior Executive Vice President for External Affairs. Her responsibilities with SBC included all regulatory and legislative policy and strategy. A native of Louisville, Kentucky, and the daughter of a Baptist preacher, Carr is a graduate of Vanderbilt University and the University of Texas at Austin. She serves on the boards of the Yellow/Roadway Corporation, Temple-Inland, the Foundation for Women's Resources, and the United Way, Capital Area. She and her husband, Max Carr, reside in Austin and are members of University Presbyterian Church.

Spring board action

Austin Seminary's Board of Trustees took the following action during its May 2008 meeting:

- Revised the title of Vice President for Student Affairs to Vice President for Student Affairs and

Vocation, effective July 1, 2008.

- Created the position of Vice President for Admissions and appointed Director of Admissions **Jack Barden** (MDiv'88) to that position, effective July 1, 2008.
- Reappointed Dr. **John Ahn** as assistant professor of Old Testament, effective July 1, 2009.
- Reappointed Dr. **C. Ellis Nelson** (MDiv'40) as research professor in Christian education.
- Approved the revised Covenant between the Seminary and the Synod of the Sun.
- Approved the search for a new professor of worship and liturgics.
- Approved a new curriculum for the Master of Divinity program as recommended by the faculty.
- Approved unanimously the board's Chapel Task Force's revision of chapel policies to affirm the Seminary's adherence to the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with reference to services of Christian Marriage.
- Approved unanimously the board's Housing Task Force's revision of housing policies to affirm the Seminary's adherence to the tradition of social witness policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with reference to civil rights for fair housing.
- Awarded The Charles L. King Preaching Award to **Meredith Leigh Kemp-Pappan**.

President Ted Wardlaw was unable to attend this year's General Assembly, as he served in June as Conference Preacher for both weeks of the Montreat Worship and Music Conference. More than 2,000 musicians, pastors, choir members, and others from throughout the country attended the conference; Wardlaw preached at thirteen worship services. Montreat is one of three national conference centers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).



FACULTY BRIEFS

John Ahn, assistant professor of Old Testament, delivered a paper at the 2008 Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) International Meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, July 6-11.

Whit Bodman, associate professor of comparative religions, taught a six-week course for the University of Texas Forum on the Bible and the Qur'an and had an article published in *The Review and Expositor on Muslim-Christian Relations*.

Allan Cole, the Nancy Taylor Williamson Associate Professor of Pastoral Care, published three essays on texts for Holy Week in *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary, Year B, Volume 2: Lent through Eastertide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008). He also led training for the board of deacons at Madison Avenue Presbyterian

Church in New York City and gave a talk on "Nurturing Boys in their Spiritual Lives" at Nassau Presbyterian Church in Princeton, New Jersey.

Jim Currie, director of the Houston Extension program, delivers the Summer Lecture Series at St. Philip Presbyterian Church, Houston, on August 3, 4, and 5.

A book edited by Associate Professor of Constructive Theology **David Jensen** has been published by Westminster John Knox. A review of the book, *The Lord and Giver of Life: Perspectives on Constructive Pneumatology*, describes it as "an array of contemporary theologians [who] reflect on the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to some of the world's most pressing issues and problems ... Offering a corrective to disembodied discussions of the Spirit, this book provides a look at the Holy Spirit set loose and sustaining the gift and struggle for life in the midst of today's troubled world."

Academic Dean **Michael Jinkins** spoke at the Austin Seminary gathering at General Assembly on "Five Challenges Facing Our Church Today." He made a presentation to the Association of Theological Schools on organizational culture and leadership in June.



The Southeast Asian Lay Training Program celebrated its fifteenth year at the Seminary. Each June the group gathers from all over the country for study, worship, and fellowship. This year the courses were taught by Professors Whit Bodman and Andy Dearman, who enjoyed the benefits of some delicious home-cooked lunches.

The article, "A Door Ajar," by **David Jones**, director of the Doctor of Ministry program, will be published in the Fall 2008 issue of *Journeys*, the magazine of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors.

Timothy D. Lincoln, associate dean for seminary effectiveness and director of the Stitt Library, has successfully defended his dissertation proposal, "The Seminary Experience: Conceptual Worlds of First-Career and Second-Career Seminarians."

Monya Stubbs, assistant professor of New Testament, offered the opening prayer at the Texas State Democratic Convention in Austin on June 7. Fifteen thousand people were in attendance.

IN MEMORIAM

Jorge Lara Braud (MDiv'59) died on June 22 after a fall near his home in Austin, Texas. A native of Mexico, Lara-Braud came to the U.S. to attend high school at Presbyterian Pan-American School in Kingsville, Texas, and stayed to graduate from Austin Seminary where he received the Alumni Fellowship. Lara-Braud taught missions at Austin Seminary from 1964-66 and returned in 1972 as visiting professor of theology. He founded the Hispanic-American Institute at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and was its first director. Lara-Braud served as the dean of the Presbyterian Seminary of Mexico, taught at San Francisco Theological Seminary, and served on the National Council of Churches. A memorial service was held June 25 at El Buen Pastor Presbyterian Church in Austin where Lara-Braud had been a lay pastor for many years.

The Dean's Bookshelf

Surprises

One of the more ironic barriers to learning new things is superficial knowledge. New knowledge lurks within surprises. This idea took on renewed import for me recently when I came across a quote by a writer I thought I knew pretty well. I was so surprised that I played a little game around the Seminary for several days, reading the passage to various people and asking them who they thought wrote it. Here's the passage: *Now in a well-ordered republic it should never be necessary to resort to extra-constitutional measures; for although they may for a time be beneficial, yet the precedent is pernicious, for if the practice is once established of disregarding the laws for good objects, they will in a little while be disregarded under that pretext for evil purposes.*

Most people in my poll believed the passage came from Thomas Jefferson. He was, after all, the poet of the American Revolution (as Washington called him). Others attributed it to Benjamin Franklin since it was Franklin who wrote: "Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." But both guesses were wrong. In fact, the passage was written by Niccolò Machiavelli.

Most people's knowledge of Machiavelli scarcely goes beyond a caricature of his thought based loosely on *The Prince*. I use the word knowledge here in the broadest, and perhaps least appropriate, sense because it isn't really knowledge but a general impression based on selective and superficial reading (at best) or (more likely) hearsay.

It is often our superficial knowledge of an author or an idea that gets in the way of our learning from them. We read Jonathan Edwards' "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" in high school, and either we endorse or reject Edwards' vast, subtle, complex, and brilliant thought, never bothering to read his treatises on the religious affections or freedom of the will. We hear an outrageous story about Stanley Hauerwas or a provocative quote from Søren Kierkegaard or a lyrical passage from Barbara Brown Taylor, and on the basis of a glancing acquaintance form lasting impressions that prevent us from digging deeper.

Prescott Williams, a former dean and former president of our seminary, once observed that there is a tendency in many courses to encourage superficiality among students by requiring them to read too many books. Better, in his view, to require only one text that must be read closely. One of my professors taught me that if you have a choice between reading only one book while taking notes on it or reading three books without taking notes I should always choose to read and take notes on one.

If Tom Long is correct in his observation that the greatest heresy facing the church today is not atheism but superficiality, I think it is a peculiarly broad heresy, one affecting not only the church per se, but our entire culture.

Let's not let our knowledge get in the way of our learning.

—Michael Jinkins, Academic Dean

Deanna Springall honors her father through endowed scholarship

When Deanna Springall's father, Francis, died in January 2004, she said it was the first time she had lost someone really close to her. "My dad was a really good guy," she said. "He made the world a better place ... Over the next year or so, I realized I wanted to do something to keep his name going," so she established the Francis S. Springall Memorial Fund at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

Francis Springall was the youngest of three sons of a Presbyterian minister, Herbert Springall. All three boys were raised during the Depression and went to medical school, despite hard times. Springall said that although he was quiet by nature, her father touched many lives and would be glad that she is doing something that will allow people to help others. "Religion and education were very important to him," she said. "He was well educated, articulate, and intelligent, but he was also humble and very grounded in his family," she said. "He could've chosen to chase the big bucks in private practice, but instead he worked for the VA. I've always admired that."

Springall said she knew of the Seminary but not much about it. When she first began to talk about doing something to honor her



Seminary President Theodore J. Wardlaw visits with Deanna Springall about the gift she made to honor her father.

father's memory, she thought, How can I honor the memory of my dad, and then, How does that fit in with what the Seminary wants to do? It has to match. After speaking to the Development Office about the scholarship she decided, "It would fit so beautifully with my dad's interests and his motives in life—it was almost a no-brainer at that point."

Originally, the scholarship was designed as a need-based scholarship, then Springall decided to pledge a merit scholarship that will provide a large portion of tuition (if not all) each year to one student. "It seems like there would be no greater feeling of accomplishment than to meet someone at the beginning of their time in Seminary and see them all the way out to their career," she said.

Springall was partly inspired to

fund the scholarship by her mother, Frances, who has been a long-time supporter of the University of Tennessee at Memphis Health Science Center, contributing significantly to an endowed scholarship in honor of a dean at the school. "I think I've learned from my mom," she said. Recently, Springall went to see her mother receive a lifetime achievement award from the current dean who told the audience, "Support over time is more important than a one-time check with lots of zeros."

Springall knows her father will be remembered in the hearts of those who were close to him, but she wanted to do more than that for his memory. "My essential desire was to honor my dad," said Springall. "A side benefit is that I enjoy working with the Seminary, so it's a personal benefit too."

Employees offer financial support to the Seminary

The prayers, conversations, and gifts of Austin Seminary's employees confirm that they don't just work for the Seminary, they are involved in its day-by-day nurturing of students, a part of its vision for the future, and a key part in reaching its fund-raising goals.

In January, 15% of employees made a first-time gift, bringing total giving to more than 50% of Austin Seminary's employees, a compelling testament of their loyalty to the success of Austin Seminary and its students.

Support of the Annual Fund sustains operating needs such as annual scholarships, facilities and maintenance, computer labs and resources, and faculty retention.

Our employees earn an A+!

—Carrie Leising,
Development Coordinator

John Evans retires from Austin Seminary



John enjoys a gathering at the Seminary in his honor. His twin brother, Jay, himself retiring this year after forty years with Austin College, joined in the festivities.

Though his name is synonymous with Austin Seminary in the minds of many, **John R. Evans** (MDiv'68) retired on June 30 from his position as Vocation and Placement Officer. Evans used his bounteous gifts in a variety of positions at Austin Seminary—as director of vocation and admissions (1984-1991) and vice president for development and church relations (1991-2000). He has been in his current position, assisting students with ordination exam preparedness and helping to navigate the “first call” process, since 2004.

A graduate of Austin College, Evans was ordained in 1968 by Grace Presbytery and served as associate pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Austin, from 1968-1971. He held a variety of positions at Austin College and

worked in the areas of fund development and stewardship for the Synod of the Sun, the Texas Presbyterian Foundation, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation; he also served as interim vice president for McCormick Seminary. As testament to his personal charisma and profound witness, both of his alma maters named him a distinguished graduate (Austin College, 1994; Austin Seminary, 2000); in 2005 he received an honorary doctorate from Austin College.

Evans was feted at two events during the General Assembly in June. At the Synod of the Sun luncheon on June 24, Seminary classmates **Judy Fletcher** (MDiv'68) and **David Fletcher** (MDiv'69) announced that the John R. Evans Scholarship Fund at

Austin Seminary had been established with \$25,000 contributed by more than 100 friends.

At the Austin Seminary luncheon on June 25, Academic Dean Michael Jenkins paid tribute to Evans with these words:

“I am profoundly aware that the church now, more than ever, needs models of pastoral integrity, exemplars of churchliness. We need men and women who reflect a faithful engagement with diversity, a personal stewardship that embraces all of life, a willingness to understand everything theologically, a strength to resist reducing our humanity to numbers and functions, and an awareness that we must depend on God for that which we most need in this world and for the next.

“Just when we need all of these qualities most, we must suffer the retirement of someone who has embodied these qualities throughout his distinguished ministry, and who has served as a role model of Christian hospitality and mentorship to generations of pastors: John Evans.

“Someone has said of John Evans that young pastors have never had a better friend than he. I can only expand that observation. Pastors and lay people, young and old, have never had a better friend than John Evans. You can travel across this great church from coast to coast, and find people whose lives have been touched and changed forever by this gentle Christian gentleman.

I recently watched again John Evan's favorite movie, “Harvey,” starring Jimmy Stewart. John's favorite line from that movie is a word of advice from Elwood P. Dowd: ‘Years ago my mother used to say to me, she'd say, “In this world, Elwood, you must be ... oh

so smart or oh so pleasant.” Well, for years I was smart. I recommend pleasant.’

“There’s a reading of this passage that is superficial, that would see pleasantries as glossing over the challenges we face in our church and our world. But there’s another reading, the reading John Evans has given to Elwood P. Dowd’s words of wisdom, that makes pleasantness synonymous with graciousness, that places love and the communal sharing of love that we call hospitality in priority over cleverness. In a time noisy with dissension, if we hope to face the future courageously and faithfully, we can hardly do better than to face it with “Harvey’s” wisdom embodied in John Evans’ ‘winsome’ ministry.”

Jinkins concluded his remarks with a sentiment shared by many across the denomination, “John, we aren’t ready for you to retire from the Office of Vocation and Placement at Austin Seminary. Our consolation is that you will never retire from your vocation, for which God created you and to which Christ called you.”

**Mid2009!
Winters!**

February 2-4

**Thomas G. Long
Paul Westermeyer
Mary Louise Bringle
Scott Black Johnston**

*Reunions for the
Classes of 1959 and 1969
plus a special event for
students of former
Prof. Scott Black Johnston*

Frank Baca / Lifeworks



Alum coaches homeless soccer players

With a grant from Street Soccer USA, **Sabelyn Pussman** (M.Div.'05) led a team of five Austin men to Washington, D.C. in late June to compete in the Homeless USA Cup. They are the first soccer team to represent Texas in the national tournament.

Pussman founded the team about a year ago, combining passions for soccer and community service. While only one member of the team had ever played soccer before joining the team, Pussman says the players “have become a team, working together both on and off of the soccer field. Team members have developed friendships, and have become mentors for new players. They are also working with their coach and supporting each other to set and accomplish personal goals that include working toward self-sufficiency, improving health, and nurturing their spiritual life.”

Though they didn’t win the tournament, one of Pussman’s players, Tad Christie, made the national team and will travel to the 2008 Homeless World Cup in Melbourne, Australia, in December. To learn more about Street Soccer Austin and the Homeless World Cup visit www.streetsocceratx.org

Theological Education Sunday is September 16

To schedule a student, faculty member, or administrator to deliver a sermon or minute for mission on Theological Education Sunday, September 16, please contact Georgia Smith at 800-777-6127, 512-404-4801, or alum@austinseminary.edu

Call for nominations

If you know of an alum who has made a significant contribution to the life of the church, please nominate him or her for the Austin Seminary Distinguished Service Award, at www.austinseminary.edu, (look under the alumni tab). Nominations will be received through September 10 and reviewed at the ASA Board meeting on September 22. (All nominations are kept on file for three years.) Winners of the award will be honored at the 2009 ASA Banquet.

Nominate yourself or someone else to serve on the ASA Board! We attempt to reflect the geographic, denominational, racial/ethnic, and decade diversity of our 1700 plus living alumni/ae on the ASA Board. Terms of service are three years and ASA Board members are committed to being advocates for Austin Seminary. Deadline is September 10; nominations can be made on the web, by mail, or to alum@austinseminary.edu

Fall alumni/ae gatherings:

October: Waco / Temple / Killeen

November: Ft. Worth

February: Kerrville

March: San Marcos /

Dripping Springs / New Braunfels

WELCOME...

to Meredith I. Trafton, daughter of Michael and **Charlotte Trafton** (MDiv'06).

to Mary Elizabeth "Emme" Schaefer, daughter of Leigh and **M. David Schaefer** (MDiv'07), born April 10, 2008.

CLASS NOTES

1950s

William M. Gould (MDiv'53) married Nell Tinkle April 19, 2008.

1980s

Brian J. Taylor (MDiv'88) has been appointed professor of sacred music for the Graduate Theological Foundation in South Bend, Indiana. He received his Doctor of Sacred Music degree from the Foundation in May 2007. He continues to serve as organist-choir-master for St. John's Episcopal Church in Savannah, Georgia, and also now serves as organist-choir-master for the Latin Mass Community at St. John the Baptist Catholic Cathedral in Savannah.

1990s

Emily C. Hassler (MDiv'92) has a sermon published in *Those Preaching Women: A Multicultural Collection*. Released in June 2008, the book features the sermons of thirty-three ethnically and denominationally diverse women from across the nation.

Jesus J. Gonzalez (MDiv'92) opened "The Jacob's Well," a social outreach program of the Northwest Arkansas Hispanic New Church Development Commission.

Christopher A. Volz (MDiv'95) was appointed to serve University United Methodist Church, a 1600-member congregation adjacent to the University of Tulsa campus.

Lori L. Beer (MDiv'97) married Aaron Nance on June 21, 2008.

Carol H. Merritt (MDiv'98) won the 2008 Award of Merit from the Religion Communicator's Council for her book, *Tribal Church: Ministering to the Missing Generation*.

2000s

Leigh B. Wisner (MDiv'05) married Mitch Hargis on June 21, 2008.

Ryan M. Pappan (MDiv'08) and **Meredith Kemp** (MDiv'08) married on May 31, 2008.

NECROLOGY

Jan W. Owen (MDiv'45) San Antonio, Texas, June 5, 2008.

Jorge Lara-Braud (MDiv'59) Austin, Texas, June 22, 2008.

Joseph H. Dwinnell (MDiv'60) Kemp, Texas, June 16, 2008.

David W. DeBerry (MDiv'07) Austin, Texas, April 3, 2008.



In addition to his duties as a pastor in Cheriton, Virginia, **Ernie Gardner** (MDiv'00) is a volunteer fire fighter.

ORDINATION

Tanya M. Eustace (MDiv'04) to serve Tarrytown United Methodist Church, Austin, Texas.

Elizabeth M. Kevilus (MDiv'04) to serve Carrizo Springs United Methodist Church, Carrizo Springs, Texas.



Arvilla Jean Reardon (MDiv'05) to serve Brackettville United Methodist Church, Brackettville, Texas.

William E. Rice (MDiv'05) to serve Grace United Methodist Church, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Noelie B. Day (MDiv'06) to serve Oaks Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas.

Kevin S. Jones (MDiv'06) to serve Hospice Austin.

M. David Schaefer (MDiv'07) to serve Westminster Presbyterian Church, Charleston, South Carolina.

Caressa L. Murray (MDiv'08) to serve Webster Presbyterian Church, Webster, Texas.

Scott W. Wiperman (MDiv'08) to serve Wastach Presbyterian Church, Salt Lake City, Utah.

If you have been recently ordained and are not recognized above, please contact Georgia Smith, coordinator of alumni/ae relations, at 512- 404-4801 or alum@austinseminary.edu



PNS / Shane Whisler

PNS / Joseph Williams



Austin Seminary at GENERAL ASSEMBLY



PNS / Joseph Williams

PNS / Joseph Williams



PNS / Joseph Williams

PNS / Danny Bolin



PNS / Joseph Williams



Seen at General Assembly, June 21-28 in San Jose, California, from top, clockwise: David Evans gives a copy of Professor Allan Cole's latest book to Flynn Long (MDiv'52) at Austin Seminary's luncheon; Sharon Bryant (MDiv'03) and Pat Lee (MDiv'05); Victoria Kelly (MDiv'05); Laura Mendenhall (DMin'97); Brian Merritt (MDiv'98; Trustee Michael Lindvall; and Kris Crawford (MDiv'94).



Joseph Andrews, left; Aquanetta Hicks, below; DMin graduates Debra Carl Freeman, Beth Marie Halvorson, and Jeannie Lutz, right



Left: Selena Brinegar (MDiv'04), Blake Brinegar (MDiv'01), and Kathleen Brinegar,



Lisa Marie Holley

Military chaplains Mitch Holley and Phillip Hogan, above; Teri Summers-Minette, right



Katrina Shawgo and Adam Smith, left; Ryan Kemp-Pappan and Meridith Kemp-Pappan, above

*Partnership Events
Fall | Winter 08-09*

**Houston, Texas
September 11, 2008**

**Austin, Texas
October 2, 2008**

**Dallas, Texas
October 30, 2008**

**San Antonio, Texas
November 20, 2008**

**www.austinseminary.edu
(512) 404-4806**

WINDOWS
Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
100 East 27th Street, Austin, Texas 78705-5797

Address Service Requested

Non Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Austin, Texas
Permit No. 2473